Patient Engagement: Patients as Partners

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Chief Executive Officer
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Health Council of Canada

- Key accountability measure in the 2003 and 2004 F/P/T health accords
- **Mandate**: To monitor and report to Canadians and their governments on the progress of health care renewal in Canada; disseminate information on best practices and innovation across the country
- **Goals**: Better access, high quality care, sustainable health care system
Importance of Patient Engagement in Primary Care

- Engagement is beneficial for patients, providers and for the system as a whole
  - **Patients** – engaged patients do better and feel better, take a more confident and active role in maintaining their health, are more satisfied with their care, and feel more positively about their overall health
  - **Physicians** - shared decision-making is increasingly being recognized as an ideal model of care
  - **System** - engaged patients have improved knowledge and understanding of their care, resulting in better use of health services and resources

- These findings were reiterated in our analytical work:
  *Canada Health Care Matters Bulletin #5 – How Engaged Are Canadians in their Primary Care? Results from the 2010 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey*
Patient Engagement in Primary Care: Canada Compared to Other Countries

How engaged are Canadians with their primary care compared to other countries?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% Engaged</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>United States</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>48</td>
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</table>
Levels of Engagement

Levels of engagement
Patient engagement activities are diverse and occur at various levels in the health care system

**PERSONAL CARE**
Patient and health care provider

**PROGRAM OF CARE**
Patient as part of a planning group

**SYSTEM OF CARE**
Citizen or patient as part of an engagement strategy

Individual patient/family and their provider/care team discussing decisions regarding treatment and ongoing care

Groups of patients with a common interest involved in planning for the organization and delivery of specific health services, such as regional cancer services

Citizens or patients providing input into planning or evaluating a broad range of health services or policy, for example through a survey or a public forum
Continuum of Patient Engagement

Co-Designing Services with the Patient

Definition of Patient Engagement – in Health Council of Canada Report

- Patient engagement at level of individual care
  - one-to-one interaction between patient and their regular doctor

- Engagement with one’s regular doctor **always** includes the following features:
  - are involved to extent they want to be in decisions related to care
  - have adequate time with physician during visits
  - have opportunity to ask questions about recommended treatment
Model of Analysis

Model of relationships associated with patient engagement in primary care

**ENABLERS**
- Access to care
- Coordination of care
- Continuity of care
- Information support

**ENGAGED CANADIANS**
- Always have the following with their regular doctor:
  - Are involved to extent they want to be in decisions related to care
  - Have enough time
  - Have opportunity to ask questions about recommended treatment

**OUTCOMES**
- Engagement in disease prevention/screening, health promotion
- Confidence in self-management
- Positive feelings of overall health
- Satisfaction with care
- Confidence in chosen treatment

**DEMOGRAPHIC AND CONTEXTUAL VARIABLES**
- Age, sex, urban/rural residence, education, income level, number of chronic conditions, number of prescription medications

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Key Questions

When enablers are present, are Canadians more likely to feel engaged in their care?
- Access to care
- Coordination of care
- Continuity of care
- Information support

Are engaged Canadians more likely to experience the beneficial outcomes that have been linked to engagement?
- Satisfaction with care received
- Confidence that if seriously ill, would receive most effective treatment
- Confidence in self-management of health problems
- Perception that no unnecessary repeat medical tests done
- Informed about new prescription medications
- Positive feelings of overall health
Key Questions (cont’d)

- *Which demographic and contextual variables are associated with engagement?*
  - age
  - sex
  - urban/rural residence
  - education
  - income level
  - # of chronic conditions
  - # of prescription medications
Results:
Patient Perspective
How Engaged Are Canadians in their Primary Care?

- 48% of Canadians who have a regular doctor or place to go to for care are engaged in their primary care
  - always have time with their doctor during visits
  - always have the opportunity to ask questions about recommended treatment
  - are always involved to the extent they want to be in decisions about their care

- 17% of Canadians are not engaged in their primary care at all

- Lack of adequate time with a primary care physician is a key barrier to engagement
Enablers of Engagement

- **Access to care**
  - Ease of getting answers by phone during regular practice hours
  - Time not wasted waiting for doctor at scheduled appointment

- **Coordination of care**
  - Regular doctor or someone in doctor’s practice helps coordinate other care

- **Continuity of care**
  - Regular doctor or medical staff know important information about medical history

- **Information support**
  - Regular doctor or medical staff explain things in a way that is easy to understand
  - Follow-up with test results
Outcomes of Engagement

- Excellent quality of care: Engaged 61%, Not fully engaged 22%
- Very confident in treatment: Engaged 35%, Not fully engaged 19%
- Very confident in controlling and managing health problems: Engaged 49%, Not fully engaged 36%
- No unnecessary repeat tests: Engaged 96%, Not fully engaged 88%
- Felt informed about medication: Engaged 97%, Not fully engaged 90%

Legend: Engaged, Not fully engaged
Outcomes of Engagement

Respondents were asked:

*In general, how would you describe your own health?*

![Bar chart showing the outcomes of engagement.](chart.png)

- Excellent/Very Good: 66 Engaged, 57 Not fully engaged
- Good: 25 Engaged, 30 Not fully engaged
- Fair/Poor: 10 Engaged, 13 Not fully engaged
Demographic and Contextual Variables Associated with Engagement

- Patients who are engaged in primary care are more likely to be:
  - female
  - age 50 or older

- Both men and women in younger age groups are less likely to be engaged
Results: Physician Perspective
Physician Experiences with Patient Engagement

**Satisfaction with Patient Relationships**

- Level of satisfaction with patient relationship
  - Very satisfied: 48%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 37%
  - Neutral/dissatisfied: 15%

- Routinely review data on patients’ satisfaction with care

% of Physician Respondents
Physician Experiences with Patient Engagement

Access to Care and Caring for Patients

Had arrangements for after hours care: 44%

Ability to provide same-day or next-day appointments at patients request: 18%

Patients experience long waits to see a specialist/consultant: 75%

Gave patients with chronic diseases written instructions about how to manage their care at home:
  - Occasionally: 52%
  - Rarely: 16%

Patient expectations are placing increasing demands on time: 75%
Physician Experiences with Patient Engagement

**Care Coordination**

Sometimes or rarely/never get timely reports back from specialists

Sometimes or rarely/never get reports back with all relevant patient health information from specialists

**Use of Information Technology**

Gathering information of patients' medications would be difficult or could not be done at all

Easy to generate a list of all medications taken by an individual patient
Conclusions

- There is room for improvement in primary care in Canada. Taken as a whole, enabling factors and positive outcomes that are linked to patient engagement represent the experience of only 48% of Canadians who have a regular doctor or place of care.

- Too few Canadians enjoy access to care, good continuity of care, help in coordinating specialist and other services, and clear information from their provider.

- Time is a fundamental currency for patients and a challenge for many family physicians. Patients benefit from being engaged in their care; they feel better about their care and about their health. But this requires that physicians both have time and take time for meaningful discussion and interaction.
What Does This Mean For You?

What can physicians do?

- Take practical steps to re-design services around patient needs

Examples:

Ask patients if they feel involved to the extent that they want to be in decisions related to their care - If they don’t, find out what more can be done

Make it easy for patients to phone the office and get answers about health problems

Investigate innovative models of scheduling such as advanced access

Have someone follow-up with patients to provide test results and address relevant questions

Use self-management support strategies for patients with chronic conditions
What Does This Mean For You?

What can patients do?

- Patients have control over their side of the patient-provider relationship and a responsibility to ask questions and seek more information when they need it

Examples:

Bring a list of questions and concerns to the doctor’s appointment

Ask doctor to explain things again if you don’t understand

Bring someone to appointment. They may raise points you haven’t thought of, and can help you sift through information later and remember what was said

Follow the treatment plan, including self-management support strategies that you and your doctor have agreed on
Let’s talk …

Thank you. Merci.

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